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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3720th meeting of the Security Council, held on 4 December 1996 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Sierra Leone", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council warmly welcomes the Peace Agreement signed by the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front in Abidjan on 30 November 1996. The Agreement brings to an end a bitter conflict which has caused appalling suffering to the people of Sierra Leone. The Council pays tribute to the courage and determination of all those who have worked tirelessly towards this end. The Council hopes that the Agreement will provide encouragement to those working for peace in other parts of Africa.

"The Security Council commends in particular the role played by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire whose commitment and determination in the chairmanship of the negotiations between the parties have been crucial to this successful outcome. The Council also pays tribute to the support provided to the negotiations by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General in close coordination with the Organization of African Unity, the Commonwealth, the Economic Community of West African States and other organizations and neighbouring countries.

"The Security Council continues to follow developments in Sierra Leone with close interest. The Peace Agreement is an essential first step towards national reconciliation and reconstruction. The Council will continue to support the development of peace and democracy in Sierra Leone. It notes in particular the need for a successful process of demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and stands ready to assist in this process. It stresses the importance of a coordinated international effort to alleviate the humanitarian situation in the country.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to continue to monitor the situation in Sierra Leone and to keep the Council informed of further significant developments."

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